Introduction to Communication

- Communication
  - Is the process of transferring information by using meaningful symbols so that a message is understood by others.
  - Can be downward, upward or horizontal.
The Communication Process

- Steps in the Communication Process
  1. Sender identifies an idea or a message that is to be communicated.
  2. Sender selects the medium and encodes and transmits the message.
  3. Receiver hears and decodes the message.
  4. Information travels from the receiver to the sender.

Mainstream Communication

- Step 1: Identify the main idea or message to be transmitted.
  - Message
    - A specific idea or general information to be communicate to others.
  - Filtering
    - When information is withheld or not communicated to others.
      - Positive filtering—withstanding non-relevant information
      - Negative filtering—withstanding relevant information
Mainstream Communication (cont’d)

• **Step 2: Encode and transmit message**
  - Identify and overcome communication barriers
    • Noise (interferences and distractions)
    • Time (crafting and encoding)
    • Length of message
    • Semantic problems
  - Choose communication media and channels
    • Media richness (ambiguity resolution)
      – Feedback, cues, number of channels

Mainstream Communication (cont’d)

• **Step 2: Encode and transmit message**
  - Choose communication media and channels
    • Media richness (ambiguity resolution)
      – Feedback, cues, number of channels
    • Proxemics
      – The study of how physical space conveys messages.
    • Ergonomics
      – The science of designing work spaces and tools to improve working conditions without compromising productivity.

Figure 17.2: Richness of Communication Media
Information Channels

- **Formal Communication Channels**
  - Follow the lines of authority that are shown on an organization chart.

- **Informal Communication Channels**
  - May skip hierarchical levels and cut across vertical chains of command into different departments.

- **Grapevine**
  - The information network along which unofficial information flows.

Mainstream Communication (cont’d)

- **Step 3: Receive and Decode Message**
  - **Decoding**
    - The process through which the receiver attributes meaning to the message.
    - Effects of noise on understanding
    - Effects of medium and channel on richness and meaning
  - **Perception**
    - Stereotyping—categorization and classification
    - Selective perception—screening out information
What Do You Think:
How Does Context Influence the Perceived Meaning of Messages?

• As you read the first paragraph of the story, what message did you think Smailovic was sending?
• What message did the reporter hear amidst the snipers?
• Now that you have finished the story, what message do you think Smailovic was trying to send?
• Can you recall an organizational setting where similar multiple interpretations were possible for a single message.

Table 17.1: Hallmarks of Active and Poor Listening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Listening</th>
<th>Poor Listening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concentration on verbal and nonverbal messages</td>
<td>Failing to listen, filtering out what to say next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal feedback, nodding, mimicking body language</td>
<td>Being easily distracted (e.g., multitasking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-minded, structuring information</td>
<td>Anticipating and prejudging what the person will say, impatience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing feedback, paraphrasing, clarifying</td>
<td>Assuming the message was understood as intended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mainstream Communication (cont’d)

• Step 4: Information flows from receiver-to-sender (feedback)
  – Feedback
    • How the receiver lets the sender know whether the message has been received as intended.
  – Benefits of feedback
    • Allows for checking that the message was received as intended.
    • Provide the sender with an opportunity to learn something new to improve the message.
    • Provides constructive criticism
Multistream Communication (cont'd)

- Step 1: Identify the main idea or message to be transmitted
  - Multistream communications:
    - Reflect the perspective of multiple stakeholders
    - Focus less on “selling” preferred ideas to others and more on seeking and welcoming divergent ideas and views.
    - Do not focus solely on communication dealing with task-related topics, but also try to build relationships and community.

Multistream Communication (cont'd)

- Step 2: Encode and transmit the message
  - Multistream communications:
    - Identify “noise” as “opportunities” for improvement.
    - Use media and channels to enhance participative management.
    - Are used by Multistream managers for face-to-face communication.

Multistream Communication (cont'd)

- Step 3: Receive and decode message
  - Multistream decoding:
    - Is receptive to ideas that go beyond productivity.
    - Do not consider “noise” as all bad.
    - Takes place on the group level where it embraces diversity, multiple forms of well-being, and mutual understanding.
  - Collective decoding
    - Occurs when a message is interpreted by a group of two or more people with the result that each member learns more than any one could alone.